

REMARKS

I. Introduction

With the cancellation herein without prejudice of claims 1 to 4, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 16 to 20, 23 and 24, claims 5, 6, 9, 10, 14, 15, 21 and 22 are pending in the present application. In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable, and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Entry of this paper is respectfully requested, since the present paper: (1) cancels without prejudice all of the finally rejected claims, i.e., claims 1 to 4, 7, 8, 12, 13, 16 to 20 and 24; (2) amends claims 9 and 10 in the manner proposed in the Reply Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 filed on March 12, 2004, which amendments the Advisory Action indicates will overcome the rejection raised under 35 U.S.C. § 112; and (3) cancels without prejudice withdrawn claims 11 and 23. Thus, the present paper on its face clearly places the present application in condition for immediate allowance.

II. Rejection of Claims 9 and 10 Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 9 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as allegedly indefinite. The Examiner will note that claim 9 has been amended herein without prejudice to remove reference to "the linkage system." It is therefore respectfully submitted that the present rejection has been obviated, and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested. As indicated in the Advisory Action, the amendments to claims 9 and 10 obviate the present rejection. Withdrawal of this rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

III. Rejection of Claims 1, 4, 7, 8, 12, 13, 18 to 20 and 24 Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 1, 4, 7, 8, 12, 13, 18 to 20 and 24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,303,269 ("Faughnan"). While Applicants do not agree with the merits of this rejection, to facilitate matters, claims 1, 4, 7, 8, 12, 13, 18 to 20 and 24 have been canceled herein without prejudice, thereby rendering moot the present rejection. Withdrawal of this rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

IV. Rejection of Claim 2, 3, 16 and 17 Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 2, 3, 16 and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over the combination of Faughnan and U.S. Patent No. 3,156,496 ("Davidson"). While Applicants do not agree with the merits of this rejection, to facilitate matters, claims 2, 3, 16 and 17 have been canceled herein without prejudice, thereby rendering the present rejection moot. Withdrawal of this rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

V. Nonstatutory Double Patenting Rejection of Claims 1 to 3, 5 to 10, 12 to 17, 19 to 22 and 24

Claims 1 to 3, 5 to 10, 12 to 17, 19 to 22 and 24 were rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as unpatentable over claims 1 to 3, 7 to 10, 12, 16 to 20 and 24 to 27 of U.S. Patent No. 6,056,341. A terminal disclaimer was filed on March 12, 2004, thereby obviating the present rejection. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

VI. Withdrawn Claims 11 and 23

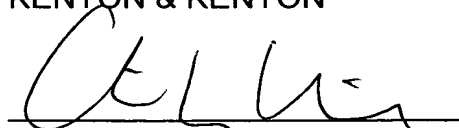
Claims 11 and 23, which were withdrawn from further consideration, have been canceled herein without prejudice.

VII. Conclusion

It is therefore respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable. All issues raised by the Examiner having been addressed, an early and favorable action on the merits is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,
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